

Pastors guilty of hating Muslims

Tribunal judge rules church seminar vilified Islam

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A state tribunal in Australia yesterday found two evangelical Christian pastors who conducted a church seminar on Islam guilty of inciting hatred against Muslims.

Daniel Nalliah and Daniel Scot of [Catch the Fire Ministries](#) were tried under Victoria's new race and religion hate laws after the the Islamic Council of Victoria filed legal action, charging Scot called Muslims demons, liars and terrorists



Danny Nalliah (Photo: Catch the Fire Ministries)

Transcripts of the seminar in Melbourne show Scot, born in Pakistan, was quoting verses from the Quran to make his points, but three Australian converts to Islam who attended part of the seminar brought their notes to the Islamic Council.

The [decision \[pdf file\]](#) came as 100 supporters and members of Catch the Fire Ministries sang Christian songs outside the tribunal.

The Islamic Council's complaint also said Scot told the congregation Muslims were training to take over Australia and Islam was an inherently violent religion.

In the [Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal](#) yesterday, Judge Michael Higgins found that throughout the seminar Scot had made fun of Muslim beliefs and conduct.

"It was done, not in the context of a serious discussion of Muslims' religious beliefs," the judge said, according to The Australian

"It was presented in a way which is essentially hostile, demeaning and derogatory of all Muslim people, their god, Allah, the prophet Muhammad and in general Muslim religious beliefs and practices," he said.

The judge also found a website article and newsletter published by Catch the Fire Ministries to be breaches of the religious vilification legislation.

Higgins will hear submissions from lawyers in January to decide on fines. There is no limitation on the amount of fines, The Australian said.

The ruling was an important victory for the Muslim community, Islamic Council president Yasser Soliman told the paper.

"We are not their enemies, we are fellow Australians," he said. "We don't want to be positioned as an enemy or painted as one."

Soliman said "vilification" is a "tool that is sometimes used by extremists" that is meant to "hurt."

Nalliah and Scot indicated they will consider an appeal.

"Freedom of speech is one of our fundamental values in Australia and this case is not over," Scot said, according to the Australian paper.

"We cannot let freedom of speech be taken away from us; religion cannot be legislated.

Scot said the purpose of the seminar, just months after 9-11, was to increase understanding of Muslim culture.

Nalliah insisted there was "no hate speech at all."

"It was teaching and understanding of what we knew of what the holy book of Islamic faith says," he explained. "And I believe we, in a free and democratic society, should have the freedom to speak up."

As [WorldNetDaily reported in February](#), Catch the Fire Ministries turned the table on its accuser, arguing in court that Christianity in Australia has special protection under the constitution.

Lawyer David Perkins asserted that if Victoria's Racial and Religious Tolerance Act of 2001 curbs the teaching of Christian doctrine, it is invalid. He further claimed Australia's blasphemy law was intended to protect only Christianity.

The law refers to "lawful religion," which disqualifies Islam, because it preaches violence, Perkins emphasized.

"The Quran contradicts Christian doctrine in a number of places and, under the blasphemy law, is therefore illegal," he said.

Note from pastor Kevin: The reader might be interested in our posting under [hanouts/links/Islam/](#) titled, "Do We Worship the same God," which relates to this article giving a plausible reason why hate crime legislation is being used solely against Christians.